

# Exploring Poverty

ECHO Training

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# How Do You Define Poverty?

Typically understood and restricted to mean "deficit"

*"The state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support."*

- [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)





# Exploring Poverty

*"26,500 children die of preventable causes related to poverty every day - almost 10 million a year!"*

- Richard Stearns, *The Hole In Your Gospel*

*"The three causes of poverty, according to the Bible, are oppression, calamity, and personal moral failure."*

-Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice*

*"Almost all poverty is fundamentally the result of a lack of options...The root cause of poverty is often injustice."*

- Richard Stearns, *The Hole In Your Gospel*





# Expanding Our Understanding

- Bryant Myers - Walking With The Poor

**Deficit** - in **resources**, **skills**, and **knowledge**

**Entanglement** - snared in a **poverty trap** of **material poverty** (few assets, poor health, land issues, etc.), **vulnerability** (few buffers against emergencies), **powerlessness** (lacks ability/knowledge to influence life/social systems around it).

**Disempowerment**: snared in **poverty trap** because of **cultural**, **social**, **spiritual**, **personal** (lack of identity/lifetime of suffering) and **biophysical** (body, mind, spirit)

**Lack of Access to Social Power**: **Poor households**, while heavily influenced by state, civil society, corporate economy and political community, they **can not influence** any of these.



# BIG Five Contributors

- (1) Ignorance
- (2) Sickness/disease
- (3) Apathy
- (4) Dishonesty
- (5) Dependency





# Dependency

- Give once and you elicit appreciation
- Give twice and you create anticipation
- Give three times and you create expectation
- Give four times and it becomes entitlement
- Give five times and you establish dependency

- Robert Lupton, Toxic Charity





# Overly Restricted Measurements

Absolute poverty an income level which can not sustain for a minimum diet of at least **2,100 calories** per person per day.

Moderate poverty those who live under the bar of \$2 (or \$5) per day per person.

Extreme poverty identifies those who live under \$1.90 per day.



# Percentage of Income Spent On Food

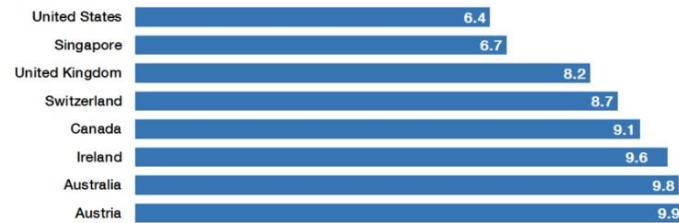
World Economic Forum

- The **US spends only 6.4 percent** of its income on food - the lowest in the world.
- People in Nigeria - spend up to **56.4 percent**



## These countries spend the least on food

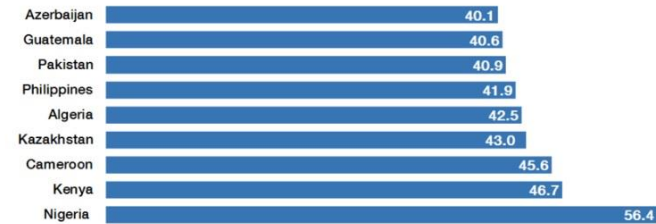
Percent of consumer expenditure spent on food that was consumed at home, by selected countries, 2015



Source: ERS, USDA calculations based on data from Euromonitor International

## These countries spend the most on food

Percent of consumer expenditure spent on food that was consumed at home, by selected countries, 2015



Source: ERS, USDA calculations based on data from Euromonitor International  
Image: World Economic Forum



# Three Dimensions of Poverty

## Multidimensional Poverty Index

(Source: Oxford University Global Multidimensional Poverty Index)

- Terry Dalrymple, Beyond Poverty

<b>Health</b>	Nutrition
	Child Mortality
<b>Education</b>	Years of schooling
	School attendance
<b>Living Standards</b>	Cooking fuel
	Sanitation
	Drinking water
	Electricity
	Housing
	Assets

# Categories of Poverty

Generational poverty occurs in families where two or more generations are born into poverty.

Situational poverty occurs when individuals experience some type of loss.

Children born into generational poverty very rarely develop the tools needed to escape the grips of poverty.





# How to Respond ...

Our assumptions about the causes of poverty will shape our approach to addressing poverty...

Poverty Caused By...	Appropriate Approach ...
Catastrophe	Relief operation
Failing economy	Economic stimulation (macro)
Oppressive systems/regimes	Political advocacy/social justice
Lack of access to knowledge	Education
Personal sin	Evangelism/Discipleship
Degrading environment	Ecological intervention



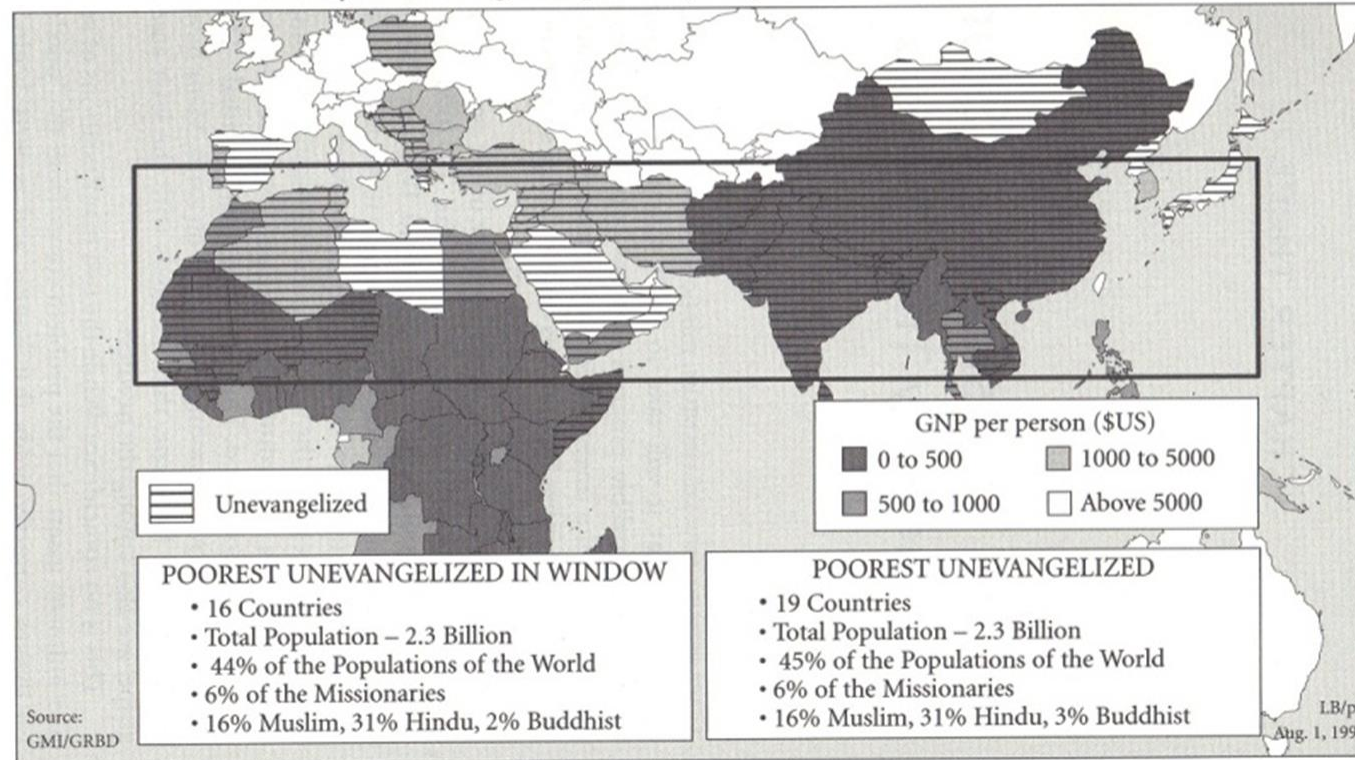
# A Linkage Exists Between Physical and Spiritual Poverty

Discipling Nations by Darrow Miller p. 66

## The 10/40 Window

The Poor, The Unevangelized, & The 10/40 Window

*99% of the unevangelized poorest of the poor live in the 10/40 Window*





# Community Development Components

Community development at its foundation is the **improvement of life conditions** that affect **knowledge, skills, and mindsets**.

**Knowledge and skills are external factors** while **mindsets are internal**.

Until the internal mentalities are changed, true transformation will not occur.

Romans 12:2 - "... be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**."



# What Is A Poverty Mindset?

Parallels between Poverty **Mindset** and the third  
(unfaithful) servant found in Matthew 25

[not money or skills - but mindset]

*"What a tragedy to have money in your pocket but poverty in your heart."*

- Pastor Tony Evans



# Matthew 25: 14 - 25

14: Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15: To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16: The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17: So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18: But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19: After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20: The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more." 21: His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" 22: The man with the two talents also came. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more." 23: His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" 24: Then the man who had received the one talent came. "Master," he said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25: So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

# (1) Lack Of Personal Commitment

15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey...

18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, **dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.**

- Each servant had *SOMETHING* (or a loss of dignity)
- Each according to his capacity (i.e. ability to manage; not "deserved")
- We are called to live up to our capacity
- Lack of personal commitment = laziness

*The poor, no matter how destitute, have enormous untapped capacity; find it, be inspired by it, and build upon it"*  
- Lupton; Toxic Charity

**KEY: Focus on what one DOES have**



## (2) Mark Of Unfaithfulness

18: But the man who had received the one talent went off, **dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.**

- Unfaithful at two levels (1) hiding and (2) misuse
- Servant's perspective: Hiding talent later explained as (1) harsh master, (2) fear
- Master's perspective: Hiding talent = unfaithfulness
- When dealing with fear, (master?, inexperience?, negative feedback?, the unknown, etc.) sometimes the most difficult step is the FIRST step

*Scripture does not call us to rescue lazy people from poverty. Instead Scripture calls us to serve and supplement the responsible.”* - David Platt

**KEY: Accompany people towards taking that first step**

## (3) No Identification With The Process/Ownership

20, 22, 25 - 20: The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more."

25: "So I was afraid and went out and hid **your** talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to **you**."

- May have believed he wasn't capable - undersold his own abilities?
- Common mindset: Solutions often seen as only able to come from outside.
- No "skin in the game" - created distance from the desired action
- Objectively unable to see HIS role in improving HIS own situation.

**KEY: Seek to facilitate an "ownership" mindset**



# (4) No Understanding Of Combined Divine/Human Effort

20, 22, 25 - 20: The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more."

25: "So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you!"

- Sometimes there is a willingness to just live with LESS than to live into the fullness of what God desires for us.
- Promote understanding and acknowledgement that God supplies the initial resource - but also that everyone must engage with what they have to contribute

**KEY: Help people recognize, utilize, and increase what they already have = faithfulness.**

## (5) Predisposed Thinking (Fatalism)

24: Then the man who had received the one talent came. "Master," he said, "I **knew** that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed."

- Preconceived ideas can disconnect one from action - create apathy/powerlessness
- 3rd servant began with an excuse - fear is later mentioned as an excuse [poverty mentality indicator]
- The most significant predisposed posturing is fatalism - feeling of hopelessness and futility.
- Fatalism also acceptance of current lot/position in life
- Leads to self-fulfilling prophesy - you believe it so it is
- Theory of "learned helplessness" - psychology

**KEY: Focus on providing HOPE in the midst of fatalism! Start on the pathway towards hope by discussing and encouraging options in pursuit of alternative, positive, solutions.**

**How does the mindset of fatalism express itself?  
How does the mindset of faith express itself?**



# Mindset

(Disciplining Nations by Darrow Miller - Figure 11.4)

Fatalism	Faith
Fear of failure	Courage to risk
I can't do it	All things are possible
I am a victim	I am a responsible person
Resign myself to fate	Rebel against the world
Life happens to me	Life is what I make it (with God's help)
Man is like a pebble in a still pond; he does not move the water, the water moves him	Man is like a pebble thrown into a still pond; his impact creates ripples that go on forever
Dependent/Responder	Interdependent/Initiator
Tradition/Unchanging	Progress/Innovative
Bureaucratic	Entrepreneurial
"We" Centered - inward	"They" Centered - outward
Luck (Fail)	Hard Work (Achieve)

## (6) Skewed Perception Of Reality

24: Then the man who had received the one talent came. "Master," he said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed."

- Unknown if this is reality or misconception of master's character
- Excuse may not have been logical or perhaps based on past
- Poverty mindset often skews and warps perception but perception is still reality.

**KEY: Help reshape perception through objectivity and speaking "reality" (hard truths) into their lives**

## (7) Transfer Of Responsibility To Others

24: Then the man who had received the one talent came. "Master," he said, "I knew that YOU are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed."

- Man in his natural state rarely wants to take responsibility for his actions
- Did not want to be held accountable - shifted the blame.
- May have been trying to deflect - get the focus off his lack of engagement
- The projection of the source of one's problems outside of one's self.

**KEY: Help create systems of accountability & responsibility**



## ( 8) Immobility

18: But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

25: "So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

- The only servant who did NOTHING was the one with the smallest number of talents
- Was there fear of failure?
- Needed validation/sympathy?
- Poverty mindset can sap motivation and energy = disengagement
- Immobility & disengagement lead to destruction
- May have been content to leave things the way they were.

**KEY: Take "small" action steps towards healthy growth**

## (9) Tendency To Compare Himself To Others

21: His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

23: His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

- May have felt he had "little" compared to others
- No distinction by the master between quantities
- We are only viewed in relation to ourselves and what we have been given
- The issue for the master is faithfulness with what one does have

**KEY: Help people learn to measure themselves with themselves - encouragement, accountability, responsibility**

# (10) Not A Risk Taker

18: But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

25: "So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

- The unfaithful servant is the only non risk taker
- Perhaps he lacked initiative; not visionary; lacked creativity ...
- BUT there is safety in doing NOTHING
- Those with the least have the least margin (and sometimes appetite) for risk
- It appears from the master's posturing that it would have been better to do SOMETHING and fail than to do nothing at all.

*"The cost of inaction is almost always greater than the cost of a mistake."* - Craig Groeschel, GLS

Barriers To Risk (Disciplining Nations by Darrow Miller - p. 235)

- Lack of compelling vision
- Mentality that deifies (holds sacred) the past
- Fatalism
- Fear of failure
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of the future
- Selfishness

**KEY: Encourage doing (growth-oriented)  
"something." Action produces more action!**



# (11) Lack Of Foresight

18: But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

25: "So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

- The focus is on today's issues/problems only - living in the present (shortsightedness).
- May have preferred dependency rather than having to engage in this process.
- *"The enemy of success is not failure, it's comfort."*  
Michelle Poler, GLS
- Lacked understanding (or motivation) for growth potential.
- Perhaps did not want to contribute to master's betterment (economic growth)?

**KEY: Accompany people towards a "forward-thinking" or "planning" mindset - start by exploring goals and dreams**

# (12) Emotional & Relational Brokenness

## **With Master**

- Resentment - negativity
- Judgmental attitude
- Lack of trust
- Jealousy
- Unjust - unfair
- Cruel

## **With Others**

- Appears to rely only on himself without seeking others for assistance - operates in isolation.
- Jealousy?

## **With Outside World**

- Lack of experience and/or understanding of putting into practice what the other two produced.
- System rigged against him

## **With Self**

- Lack of trust of self
- Self esteem issues - little self-worth
- Self-pity
- Chip-on-the-shoulder mentality
- Insecurity

*Influenced by When Helping Hurts - Corbett & Fikkert*

**KEY: Model, teach, and coach how to embrace God's "Shalom" - Biblical Wholism**

# Renewing the Christian Mind: Essays, Interviews, and Talks

(Dallas) Willard Family Trust, 2016

*"The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow our minds to dwell upon. It is in our thoughts that the first movements toward the renovation of the heart occur. Thoughts are the place where we can and must begin to change..."*

*"Our essential nature as active and creative beings depends upon our ability to envision what is not the case, as well as what is. Our ability to plan for the future must constantly run ahead of reality. And this we do in thought. A will that runs ahead depends, of course, upon our ability to think; and what we think, imagine, believe, or guess sets boundaries to what we can or will chose, and therefore to what we can create..."*

*"As our senses present a landscape for our body and its actions, so our thoughts present the 'lifescape' for our will and our life as a whole. Within that 'thought lifescape,' which includes our perceptions, we make the decisions that determine what we will do and who we will become."*



